

FEATURED

**AN OPEN
LETTER TO
CAREGIVERS
From One
Caregiver
to Another**

page 6



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There are only four kinds of people in the world: Those who have been caregivers; those who currently are caregivers; those who will be caregivers; and those who will need caregivers.

— Rosalyn Carter, American writer, activist, and former First Lady

Dear Caregivers, In a world where brain injury is still often overlooked and misunderstood, classifying it as an “invisible disability” is no exaggeration. No one knows this better than the survivors who live with these injuries, and YOU—the caregiver who is so much more—advocate, sounding board, cook, financial support, activities coordinator, driver, loved one... the list is ongoing.

Like Rosalyn Carter so eloquently stated, many of us on *The Noggin* staff have been caregivers ourselves, or work in constant proximity with those who are. We understand the long days that somehow still lack sufficient hours to get everything done, the sleepless nights, the feelings of being overwhelmed. While saying you’re not alone is accurate (nearly 1 in 5 Americans provide care to a family member), it doesn’t change the realities of how isolating being a caregiver can be.

Although it can’t be overstated the incredible work you do (and it is Work, with a capital W), it bears repeating— thank you. Thank you for all you do. Mothers, fathers, siblings, children, friends, neighbors, and those who have made caregiving the focus of their careers— we want to dedicate this, the first issue of volume 7, to all of you.

We hope these stories, journal pages, recipes, word searches, and more, made by caregivers for caregivers, will help fill your cup on the good days, hard days, and everything in between.

With gratitude,



Brittany Sweeney-Lawson

Brittany Sweeney-Lawson, CBIS
Director of Care Coordination and
The Noggin Editor
Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona

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A NOTE FROM THE CEO

On Caregiving

Dear Friends –

This issue of *The Noggin* is particularly special to me. Throughout my career, I have advocated for the needs and support of our family members and friends who provide unpaid caregiving. At the Alzheimer's Association, I guided caregivers through successful advocacy in Washington DC; at United Way we looked at supports that working families needed to be successful. Now, I have been with the Brain Injury Alliance for the past seven years and have come to realize that in the brain injury community, the term "caregiver" can be complex and varied.

I grew up in a household that actively participated in caregiving for my grandmother for over 20 years as she recovered from eye surgery, which had a devastating result. She also sustained a stroke. She was determined to live to be 100 and stay in the farmhouse my grandfather built her after he emigrated to America. He had arrived in Detroit after escaping Nazi Germany by being sewn into a potato sack and smuggled into France.

They raised their 10 kids in that house, and it was a huge point of pride. Our life was a constant balancing act — working the farmland which she leased, shuttling her to church commitments, physical therapy, and doctors' appointments. Taking care of the farm and everyday needs of two households was also a regular part of my childhood. I never thought that I was caregiving because it was done out of love.

While in college, I was once again called upon to be a caregiver. While my aunt was away receiving experimental cancer treatments, I helped with the daily family and household chores for her three young children. I did not consider myself a caregiver because it would have made our situation and Aunt Alice's illness all too real.

From my personal experience of helping caregivers share their story and influence legislation, it's clear that unpaid family and friend caregivers are holding up our healthcare system and communities. However, too often, it can be at the expense of their own physical and emotional health. As a country, we simply will not have the resources and support that these heroes need until we band together and start defining ourselves as caregivers, giving a name to the value that we all bring to our families.

Dr. Phil says, "You have to name it to claim it." I urge everyone who is caring for a loved one to think about the title caregiver, claim it, and make sure that people hear your story. If you are not currently providing care for a loved one, please find a caregiver and give them an afternoon off, bring over dinner, or encourage them to go to their own doctors' appointments.

Finally, I want to say a really special thank you to our *Noggin* Committee. They have brought us an outstanding issue.



Carrie Collins Fadell, CEO
Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona

NOGGIN COMMITTEE

Brittany Sweeney-Lawson
Suzy Albanese
Kristin O'Shaughnessy
Connor LaPlant
Steve Norton



Brain Injury
Alliance
ARIZONA

Brainiac Bash Soirée Supporting Brain Health

EVENT CO-CHAIRS: Kathryn Pidgeon & Debbie Gaby

THEY ARE HONORED

Letitia Frye and Brandon Lee will be officially recognized as the Brain Injury Alliance’s Woman and Man of Courage at the Brainiac Bash on January 14, 2023. Their commitment to helping others stand as a shining example to other survivors of brain injury and their families.



As a self-described Auctiontainer™, Letitia has helped raise over \$200 million for charities with a unique style and passion for connecting with audiences. This includes her memorable and lucrative efforts at the 2022 Brainiac Bash.

Hailing from the world of stage, theater, and fashion, Letitia’s life changed in 2014 when she experienced a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Working hard to regain her health, she established a new version of herself. Now, she tours the country extolling the virtues of using adversity as a springboard to personal success.



Brandon was a fixture on Phoenix and Los Angeles television news, winning awards for his ability to tell stories that touched audiences. However, he was hiding many secrets surrounding a lifetime of drug abuse and brain injury. In 2019, he revealed all in his autobiography, *Mascara Boy*.

For the past year, he has been helping survivors recover from their traumas. Weekly acrylic pour classes at his Art of the Soul studio have been a popular staple of the Brain Injury Alliance’s ArtWORKS program. What’s more, it has given people hope to live an incredible life no matter what obstacles they face.

Letitia Frye and Brandon Lee, thank you for making a difference in the brain injury community and showing all of us the true meaning of courage.

BB
Brainiac Bash Soirée
Supporting Brain Health

Saturday, January 14, 2023
5:30pm — 10:30pm
Omni Scottsdale
Resort & Spa at Montelucia
4949 East Lincoln Drive
Scottsdale, AZ 85253

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BIAAZ.ORG/2023bash
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AN OPEN LETTER TO CAREGIVERS

From One Caregiver to Another

BY SUZY ALBANESE



Dear Caregiver,

As you undoubtedly know, caregiving is one of the hardest jobs that people perform daily, yet it's one that is talked about the least.

Providing care for a family member, friend, or loved one is a gift for those fortunate enough to provide it. This gift is not without cost, however.

Sadly, caregiver burnout is a common phenomenon experienced by those providing care. In a National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP survey of over 1,300 caregivers, 40% of individuals reported experiencing emotional stress related to their role.

This letter is not meant to incur pity or sympathy for caregivers. It is not meant to make those who need care feel like a burden or feel responsible for the challenges of caregivers.

Instead, this letter aims to provide a moment of recognition for caregivers, to remind them they are not alone, and to discuss the unique and complex dynamics that develop in a caregiving relationship.

PERSONAL TIES TO CAREGIVING

My mom was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) when I was 12. As I grew up, I watched her health and functional abilities slowly decline.

I began caring for my mom when I was 18. The role was gradual at first. But, with the progressive nature of her disease, caring for her ramped up to what felt like a full-time job after about 5 years. Over the next several years, I juggled graduate school, work, and caregiving. A social life or time to myself felt out of the question.

I felt worn out, lonely, and guilty. My mom had given me life, raised me, and now she needed me. She was battling a difficult disease that stripped her of her independence; who was I to feel bad about my situation?

These thoughts and feelings plagued me. I would frequently drop everything to assist her, to meet her every need and want. I neglected my own health because hers was worse; she needed the care more.

Eventually, I made some much-needed changes that helped me manage my role as a caregiver. Over time, these changes allowed me to become more present for my mom when she needed it. I started to notice I had more space in my heart for the empathy that I had always been able to show her in the past.

There is, unfortunately, no cure for caregiver burnout. I know what has helped me personally may not be accessible to everyone. However, I hope that sharing my experience can help others feel less alone and more empowered to make changes that will benefit them and their loved ones.

MY EXPERIENCE IN LESSENING BURNOUT

When I first started dating my husband, my caregiving duties weren't so comprehensive. He saw a little bit of what my mom needed help with, and that was that. Soon enough, I was increasingly involved in her care. This often looked like him sitting and watching while I frantically ran around, bouncing from task to task. Finally, I realized I could,

and should, ask him for help. It wasn't that he didn't want to help, but that he didn't know how to help. This was all so new to him. As soon as I said the words, it was like we never looked back. He became an integral part of my mom's "care team" and I was forever grateful for this support.

In times when things got even more serious, such as an exacerbation that required increased medical services, I relied on other family members. Navigating the healthcare system is never an easy feat, and in moments when timing is everything, it's important to have all hands on deck. I reached out to my mom's best friend who I consider family. Within moments, she was on it, and had even enlisted her son to help. Between the three of us, we were able to contact various care placements, verify services and benefits, and get my mom the help she needed.

Something else I found vital to my success as a caregiver was starting to prioritize my never-ending to-do list. When you're facing all of the tasks you need to do, it just feels like too much. I started to number my tasks in order of most to least urgent. For example, the delay on the pre-authorization for my mom's medication was more critical than the ongoing debate with a durable medical equipment provider for her hospital bed.

When I felt like things were mostly under control, I sought support in other ways. I located a local support group, specifically for caregivers of MS. There is nothing like talking to people who just get it. You feel like you can be totally yourself around them, and your sharing won't feel like complaining or a burden.

The last and hardest thing I started doing was carving out time for myself. I know it sounds counter-productive when it seems like there just aren't enough hours in the day. But, once I created this schedule for myself, it just became part of the routine, like helping my mom get dressed in the morning. I started exercising again, taking the supplements my doctor recommended, and scheduling phone calls with loved ones. Some days, I'd call my friend that would let me vent about the hardships

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Caregivers place a ton of pressure on themselves. It can feel like the care for this one person is solely your responsibility.

of caregiving. Other days, I'd call a friend that could make me laugh and provide some distraction.

CAREGIVER BURNOUT IS A SHARED EXPERIENCE

Now that I've shared some of my journey through caregiving and burnout, let's delve into what burnout looks like, why it happens, and what can be done to lessen the effects.

What does caregiver burnout look like?

Burnout can manifest itself in different ways, including, but not limited to:

- ▶ Feeling overwhelmed
- ▶ Feeling fatigued
- ▶ Becoming easily irritated
- ▶ Feeling sad, down, or hopeless
- ▶ Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed
- ▶ Withdrawal from loved ones
- ▶ Changes in appetite and/or sleep patterns
- ▶ Increased health issues

Increased stress over a long period of time is detrimental to one's health. As of 2020, 23% of Americans say caregiving has worsened their own health, which is up from a reported 17% in 2015. This is why it's so important to know the signs of burnout, be able to identify it in real time, and begin addressing it.

Why does burnout happen?

There are apparent physical, mental, and emotional aspects of caregiving that can lead to burnout. However, there are other considerations unique to the caregiving dynamic that often compound these challenges, such as: role confusion, lack of control, and unreasonable demands and expectations.

Role Confusion

Often, the onset of a caregiver role is sudden. The relationship can shift quickly as an individual goes from a spouse, parent, sibling, or friend, to the title of caregiver. The waters can become muddied as one tries to navigate both roles.

Lack of Control

Just as quickly as you become a caregiver, you're thrust into all of the responsibilities that come with it. Unlike most jobs, this isn't one that comes with a manual or rule book. There is no formal training or onboarding.

Suddenly, you're tasked with planning and managing your loved one's care. You become a home health aide, a nurse, a case manager, an advocate, a financial representative, and more.

In addition, difficulty navigating resources and financial burdens of caregiving impact your ability to feel in control of the situation.

Unreasonable Demands and Expectations

There's often an incongruence between the amount of work a caregiver feels they need to accomplish, and the amount of time they have to give each day. It can feel like a mountain that just can't be climbed.

Caregivers place a ton of pressure on themselves. It can feel like the care for this one person is solely your responsibility. Remember, before you were a caregiver, you had other responsibilities, roles, interests, and commitments. Those don't disappear when you are tasked with your new role.

How to prevent or lessen burnout

Let's not sugar coat this. Sometimes, the feelings of burnout are inevitable. But, they don't have to be permanent. Keep reading for actionable steps to take to help you overcome caregiver burnout.

Find Support

It's helpful to identify different sources of support. Consider trusted friends, neighbors, or family members and invite them in. You might be surprised how many people around you want to help, but just need a little guidance in how to best support you and your loved one.

Seeking support from friends, family, and loved ones is a great start. Fortunately, there are also professionals, such as counselors and therapists, who can be a source of support for you. There are even professionals who work specifically with caregivers and understand the unique nuances and challenges you face.

Another support that can provide a much-needed reprieve is respite care, which provides short-term relief for primary caregivers. If your loved one has Medicare, these services may be covered at home or in a facility for up to five days. Respite is also a covered service under Arizona's Health

Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), as well as some state-funded agencies.

Lastly, support groups are a great resource. There are groups for so many different demographics of caregivers. You may find one that specifically caters to your age group or one that is meant for caregivers of a loved one with a specific injury, such as brain injury (shoutout to the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona's Families of Brain Injury Support Group (aka FOBI): <https://biaaz.org/what-we-do/#support>).

Set Realistic Goals

It can feel impossible to manage your caregiving duties when faced with them all at once.

Instead, try breaking larger tasks into smaller steps so you can chip away at them one at a time. Understand that you have limits and those are acceptable and valid.

Keep your to-do lists written and as organized as you can; prioritize your tasks so the most time-sensitive or urgent ones get done first. Then, less pressing items can wait, or be executed as you have the time and energy.

Develop Coping Tools

It may seem incredulous to focus on yourself as a caregiver. Yet, there's enough evidence to show the negative impacts of not caring for yourself, too. The systems created by caregivers cannot be maintained without proper coping tools.

Acknowledge and accept your feelings. You are doing something valuable, whether or not you always feel appreciated. You are allowed to have negative thoughts and feelings. Sometimes, writing them down can be a good way to process them. At the beginning or end of each day can

continued next page

be a good time to “brain dump”, where you get out all of your thoughts and feelings on paper (or on the notes app on your phone).

Carve out moments for yourself each day, whether it’s 5 minutes in the sunshine, a walk around the block, or a phone call with a good friend. Try to view these moments as tasks on your to-do list, in the sense that they are necessary in the care of your loved one and yourself.

Set some boundaries and stick to them. Without boundaries, caregiving can become a 24/7 revolving door. It’s okay to say that you need a lunch break every day. It’s okay to prioritize sleep. You’re allowed to walk away from an argument or heavy conversation if it arises. There is always tomorrow to solve problems that cannot be solved today.

Healthy Routines

Just as you’ve created routine and structure in your caregiving role, it’s important to keep up routines for your own health. These can be as straightforward as sleeping, exercising, drinking lots of water, and eating nutritious foods.

Also, check in with your physical and mental health on a regular basis, keep up with medical appointments, and seek care when needed.

IN SUMMARY

Millions of Americans take on the uniquely complex role that is caregiving. This role, while valuable and necessary, comes with great responsibility and pressure. Burnout is common in caregiving due to its multifaceted demands and constraints.

However, there are supports, systems, and tools available to lessen a caregiver’s burden and improve outcomes for both the caregiver and the recipient of care.

Sending a warm hug and a knowing nod to all caregivers out there, doing their best every day.

Yours Truly,
A Caregiver



Author
Suzy Albanese
and her mother

SOURCES

- ▶ <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2020/05/full-report-caregiving-in-the-united-states.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00103.001.pdf>
- ▶ <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-respite-care>
- ▶ <https://www.azahcccs.gov/shared/Downloads/MedicalPolicyManual/1200/1250-D.pdf>



**Brain Injury
Alliance**
ARIZONA

You're invited!

Join a support group near you!

Available In Your Area

FOR REGISTRATION & MORE INFORMATION VISIT

<https://www.biaaz.org/support>

All support groups open to those 18 years of age and older.

IN PERSON *(all times AZ)*

- ★ **Phoenix Survivor & Caregiver Support Group**
For brain injury survivors and their family, friends and caregivers — meets the second Thursday of the month, 6:00-7:00 PM

- ★ **Prescott / Quad Cities Brain Injury Survivor & Family/Caregiver Support Group**
For brain injury survivors and their family, friends, and caregivers — meets the third Wednesday of the month, 3:00-4:00 PM

VIRTUAL *(all times AZ)*

- ★ **Brain Cave — Men's Group**
Discussion group for men who have survived any type of brain injury — meets the first Wednesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 PM
- ★ **Brain Injury Alliance Statewide Support Group**
For brain injury survivors and their family, friends and caregivers — meets the fourth Thursday of the month, 6:00-7:00 PM
- ★ **Distracted & Drunk Driving Support Group**
For those who survived an accident caused by a drunk or distracted driver — meets the fourth Friday of the month, 1:00-2:00 PM
- ★ **East Valley Brain Injury Support Group**
For brain injury survivors and caregivers — meets the second Wednesday of the month, 4:00-5:30 PM
- ★ **Families of Brain Injury**
For family members and caregivers of brain injury survivors ONLY — meets the first Tuesday of the month, 6:00-7:00 PM

- ★ **She Shed — Women's Group**
Discussion group for women who have survived any type of brain injury — meets the first Thursday of the month, 5:30-6:30 PM
- ★ **Southern Arizona Support Group**
For brain injury survivors and their families — meets the second Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:00 PM
- ★ **Stroke Support Group**
Open to survivors and family members/caregivers — meets the third Sunday of the month, 3:00-4:00 PM

Join us!

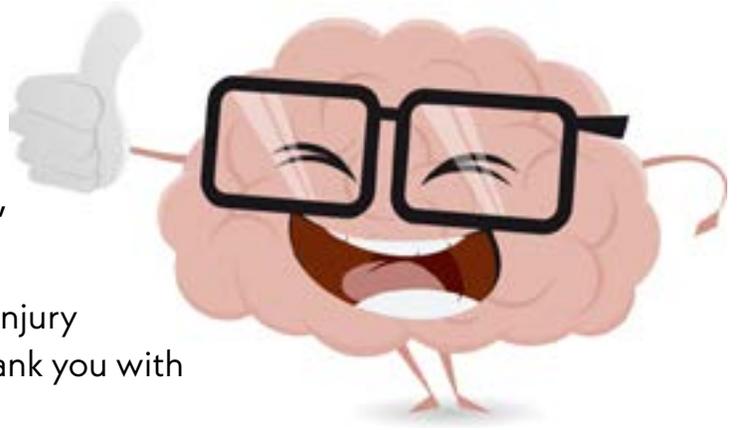
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CAREGIVER CONSIDERATIONS

Just the Stats, Ma'am!

- ① There are 53 million total caregivers in the U.S. This is up 21% from five years ago.
- ① In the U.S., there are roughly 9.5 million family caregivers, which is roughly one-in-five Americans.
- ① 24% care for more than one person.
- ① Approximately 61% are women and 39% are men.
- ① 45% of family caregivers have experienced at least one financial hardship.
- ① 61% of family caregivers also hold a separate job.
- ① Many report experiencing a decrease in their own health as a result of their unpaid responsibilities.

Care for the caregiver is essential! Just like the saying, “You’ve seen one brain injury, you’ve seen ONE brain injury...” the same hold true for caregivers; no two share the exact same struggles or circumstances. Choosing what works for you when it works for you is as important as doing it at all. Here are some tried and true options that are recommended from other caregivers like you. Feel free to add your own, and grow your list to meet your needs.

- ▶ Support groups
- ▶ Counseling
- ▶ Respite services
- ▶ “Time out” with other family members
- ▶ Access to resources
- ▶ Brain injury-specific professionals
- ▶ Self-care and personal hobbies
- ▶ Journaling

YOUR LIST

**Stats taken from the 2020 Caregiving.org report: <https://www.caregiving.org/caregiving-in-the-us-2020/>*

Mother & Son Travel the Road of Her TBI Recovery Together

BY ED ROTH



Cazoshay Marie is a familiar face in the brain health community. As a survivor of a brain injury, she is active in survivor groups, caregiver conferences, and empowerment events in Arizona.

As a result of her advocacy and speaking, many have heard the story of that horrific day in 2017 when Cazoshay was hit by a car as she moved through a pedestrian crosswalk in downtown Phoenix. She was thrown 15 feet in the air and 100 feet forward, landing on the hard concrete road, unable to move. The driver stopped, surveyed the situation, but never got out of his car. To this day, he has never been identified.

She had moved from Anchorage, Alaska six months earlier, ready for a new start. Within seconds, the professional speaker and wellness lifestyle blogger's life changed. Behind the physical injuries to her fibula, jaw, and nerves, she had a traumatic brain injury (TBI) with additional symptoms that were invisible to others. She continues to live with chronic pain, frequent migraines, issues with her neck, nerve damage, impaired vision, and short-term memory loss.

But throughout her recovery, another person has been traveling a parallel journey every step of the

way – her son Nate.

He was only 11 when the accident occurred. While he didn't witness his mother's injury, the second he heard about it, he was terrified. "In that moment, my world collapsed around me," says Nate. "I honestly thought she would die, and I'll never have a mother."

Over the next three weeks, he saw that she would survive, even though it would take some time to recover from her physical wounds. However, Nate is the kind of kid who always wants to help, and he jumped right in. "I did more chores without being asked, including helping with cooking and cleaning."

Cazoshay saw the effort her son was making and had mixed feelings. She recalls, "As his mom, I felt bad that he felt as though he had to grow up quicker in order to help me. As a single parent, I was used to doing everything myself and suddenly, it wasn't that easy."

On top of everything, the toll the TBI and nerve damage were taking only added to the stress. Nate

recognized there was more to his mom's recovery than met the eye. "I would tell her something and she wouldn't remember what I had just said. When this happened over and over, I thought, 'Maybe there's something going on inside her,'" he shares. "I saw how hard it was for her to process our conversations and there was nothing I could do about it."

In retrospect, Nate says his friends really did not know how to support him, which is a common occurrence for family members of survivors of any age. He could talk to his uncle and grandmother, who were there during Cazoshay's initial recovery, but he couldn't confide in his peers. "I tried talking to friends, but instantly regretted it," he admits. "They hadn't experienced brain injury and didn't understand. They would say things like, 'Can't she just have surgery and get better?'"

When you're a family caregiver in need of support, such suggestions can come across as unsympathetic at best. "I really resented that they tried make light of the situation," Nate says. In response to others' insensitivity, he would try to lift his sagging spirits by drawing, listening to music, and playing on devices.

The big game changer for both mother and son was when they sought therapy services. "Our counselor got us to discuss the accident and express our feelings about things. I was angry at the person who hit her. He never even got out of his car. I mean, I believe in forgiveness, but I don't know if I can ever really forgive him for his actions," Nate states.

Cazoshay feels similarly. "I do express anger sometimes. He was the only driver who didn't stop in the crosswalk. He just left me there, bleeding in the street." Seeing how all this has affected her son further added insult to injury. "I was very concerned about Nate, how he would come out of all this. He's okay, but sometimes I can see that it still affects him," she admits. Her biggest regret is missing five years of being able to see her son play basketball, flag football, and lacrosse.

As both heal from the fallout of the accident,

several things become apparent: The first is the need for support. Cazoshay has been passionately involved in several of the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona's programs, including the Unmasking Brain Injury program that uses art to help survivors visually process their experience and share their stories. She has also spoken at the annual Rays of Hope survivor and caregiver conference and participated in various support groups. Additionally, Cazoshay and her son travel with the Brain Injury Alliance CEO to talk with graduating occupational therapy students at major universities, aiming to instill in them the human aspect of healing from the invisible disability.

"There are amazing resources out there that can help you connect with others with brain injury. It's a fantastic outlet to share your story, educate others, and heal, no matter how severe your injury or prolonged your recovery," says Cazoshay.

Carrie Collins-Fadell, CEO of the Brain Injury Alliance, notes that both spiritual and physical healing are often a family affair. "Cazoshay is a bright light, illuminating the way for so many others. Like many survivors, her life changed in a moment. The way she and her son Nate are sharing their story so openly, they are continuing to give back, even when they themselves are still healing."

Second, they encourage patience. Now 15, Nate explains, "I just wanted her to get better right away. I learned that's not how it works. That's what my friends didn't understand and, really, neither did I. Just because the disability is invisible doesn't make it any easier. In fact, it's harder. Everybody's recovery is at their own pace."

Cazoshay concurs. "You have to remember progress can take years, not days. Eventually, you see results."

Third, go easy on yourself. Nate recalls those first months after the accident. "I used to think, 'Why did this happen to me at this time of my life? Out of all the millions of things, why me and my mom?' I was

continued next page



surprised by how intense my feelings were. It was like being hit by an emotional car.”

To the children of survivors, Cazoshay cautions, “Don’t try to take on everything, even if the parent can’t do as much. Kids should talk about how they feel. Nate was holding it in. Don’t push until your child is ready; it’s a process. I would always ask him how he was feeling and let him know it hurt me to

see him hold it in. It’s okay to feel anger.”

Nate remembers, “At first, I tricked myself into feeling I was fine. I was very hopeful about her being better, getting into a more normal state. It just takes time.”

Today, he has taken up fencing while also getting good grades in high school. “I help whenever I can, but I also know that I need down time and watch out for my own well-being,” he says.

Finally, never give up hope. “It doesn’t help to judge yourself against who you were or want to be,” points out Cazoshay. “I may have migraines, memory loss, blurred vision, and dizziness, but we still have a life. I still speak, share on social media, create art, and blog as I am able. And Nathaniel is a wonderful son.”

When Nate looks at his mom and how far she’s come, he beams, “I’m so proud of her.”



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FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE

Interview with my Caregiver

Noggin contributor Connor LaPlant sits down with his mom in an interview that explores the realities of becoming a caregiver to a loved one with a brain injury.

What is your personal experience/background with brain injury?

My 13-year-old son suffered a traumatic brain injury in April of 2006 in a dirt bike accident.

In what ways did becoming a caregiver change your life? How did the TBI affect the family in general?

The short answer would be that becoming a caregiver is a totally different life. The long answer would be that I think becoming a caregiver in a brain injury situation changes most aspects of everyone's life who is closely involved—the survivor of course, friends, relatives, etc., are all affected. But as a caregiver, you feel the weight and enormity of the responsibility you have acquired immediately. It is the result of a life change that simply stops you in your tracks and turns your world upside down in an instant.

And, to make matters more stressful, we find ourselves dealing with medical information that many of us are very unfamiliar with while trying to make major life decisions for our loved ones as best we can. In addition, as every brain injury is so different, you never know quite what to expect next. In the beginning, everything is coming

at you fast and furious. Then, it often slows to a snail's pace. And sometimes improvements you prayed for are more bittersweet than joyous. For instance, knowing that my son was becoming more and more aware of what had happened also meant he was also more aware of how his young life had changed and what his challenges were going to be. I hated when I kept hearing we would find a "new normal." I didn't want a new normal. I wanted the old normal.

What has been the most challenging part of being a caregiver?

For me, it was the mental exhaustion. The constant worrying and overthinking everything. The anxiety that comes with anticipation of what needs to be done next and/or what might go wrong. Second guessing just about every decision that needed to be made was daunting. The pressure of trying to do everything right while dealing with the overwhelming feelings of being inept and in over your head was consuming.

How have you kept yourself from experiencing caregiver burnout? What you do for self-care?

I've had my meltdowns. Thankfully I had people



that held me up at those times. Nobody can do it all on their own. It helps immensely to have someone you trust that steps in and helps, not only with the day-to-day issues, but also to just listen. I can't stress how important it is for you to take time to care for yourself, clear your head, and just breathe. When you get to the point where you have someone you can feel better about leaving your survivor with – even if just for a short walk – take it! You won't be doing anyone any good if you aren't rested both physically and mentally.

What do you wish you had known at the start of your caregiver journey that you know now?

It is so important to learn when to let go a little. Sometimes you simply aren't helping your survivor by helping too much. Let them do things themselves the best they can. Let them try new things. Let them learn. It's the only way they are going to feel a sense of accomplishment. It's not your accomplishment that matters. It's about your survivor's accomplishments.

Who do you recommend asking for help from when you're overwhelmed?

Sometimes it is hard to find the right people. Some see your survivor after getting up and about and think they are "all better!" Finding support from family members that truly understand what is involved is a plus but not always a reality. Friends who just listen and don't judge. Professional help to do the tough stuff if you can manage/afford to get good help. But for myself, I think it has been other caregivers I've met along

the way that have been the most helpful. They just immediately "get it" in ways others take much longer to understand.

Any tips for brand-new caregivers?

Don't look too far back and don't look too far ahead. At least not at first. Try to stay in the moment as much as possible. It helps to stay focused rather than worrying (too much) over things that might never happen. It's good to understand the possible hurdles but don't dwell in a bad place too long. Stay positive. Become aware of when you need to rest (because it can be exhausting) and be gentle with yourself. There are some things you can change, some things you can set limits on, and still some things you just have to roll with. The best we can do is all we can do.

What are some hobbies and personal interests you like to utilize for self-care?

Reading, listening to music, photography, hiking/walking, and I think maybe taking up meditation might be a good thing!

Anything else you would like to share?

I've adjusted somewhat to that "new normal" idea. Mostly because life is always changing and I find all kinds of new things that need "normalizing" most days. More than anything, as a caregiver, what I'd really like to see is the preconception of a brain injury survivor along with the stigma of having a brain injury change for the better. Survivors have just as much – if not more – to contribute positively to society if given the chance.



The Cerebral Chef



Serving Up Food for Thought

Steve Norton, co-facilitator of BIAAZ's Brain Cave Men's Discussion Group, was diagnosed with Type II Diabetes in 2006. While working as a private chef for a family in northern California in 2012, he experienced a hemorrhagic stroke, which caused paralysis on the left side of his body. Even though he had spent years ensuring those he cooked for ate healthy meals made with fresh ingredients, his own eating habits were poor due to long work hours and a busy schedule. The stroke proved to be the wake-up call Steve needed to take charge of his health and what he put into his body. He now uses food as medicine and believes people can heal their bodies from the inside-out. His Noggin column, The Cerebral Chef, offers recipes, ideas, and tips for incorporating and enjoying delicious brain-boosting foods.

CAREGIVER CONVENIENCE: HEALTHY & EASY MEAL PREP

A regular duty for at-home caregivers is providing meals. This involves shopping for groceries, meal-planning, meal-prepping, and cooking. There are some simple ways to make this process a little easier without sacrificing nutrition.

Focus on whole fruits such as apples, bananas, berries, and grapes, but be sure to choose ones that are in season as much as possible to save money. Keep whole fruits on hand for a quick snack or as a topping on yogurt or whole-grain cereal. Try including peanut butter or almond butter as a dip to add in some protein.

Fresh, easy-to-eat vegetables such as carrots, celery, cucumbers, and cherry tomatoes are also good to keep on hand. Serve as a snack with hummus for a healthy protein-rich snack. For lunch or dinner, cook a variety of colorful veggies and make a little extra to use later in a soup or pasta dish. For a boost of fiber, add chickpeas, beans, or lentils to salads or side dishes.

A small amount of protein should be included in each meal. Protein comes in many forms, such as poultry, lean meat, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts/seeds, legumes/beans, milk, yogurt, cheese (or dairy-alternatives). Try

varying the protein in recipes, like swapping ground beef with chicken or shrimp on taco night. Change to low-fat or fat-free versions of milk or yogurt.

Half of the grains in meals should consist of whole grains. Add brown rice to stir-fry dishes with fresh vegetables and proteins for a quick nutritious meal. Quinoa bowls are made up of a few simple components: cooked quinoa, vegetables/fruit, protein, and a sauce, and are great for any meal.

Breakfast should be quick, but nourishing. Serve a low-fat, fat-free or plant-based yogurt bowl topped with fresh fruit and nuts for a nutritious start to the day. Overnight oats or fruit and yogurt quinoa breakfast cereal bowls are also nutrition-packed breakfast ideas.

Lunch should be easy to prepare and something that stores well. Prep as much as possible ahead of time and include lots of fruit and veggies. Use leftovers from dinner or cook a big batch on Sunday to refrigerate or freeze for future use. Store in a glass lunch container or a BPA-free plastic one.

For some fresh meal ideas you can make in a hurry, try these easy and healthy recipes when preparing your next breakfast, lunch, or dinner.



Individual Healthy Yogurt Bowl

YOGURT | Plain Greek, almond, coconut, cashew, soy, or yogurt of choice

FRUIT | Fresh seasonal or frozen. Unique option: pomegranate pareils

NUTS | Walnuts, almonds, pecans

SEEDS | Chia, ground flax, sesame, pepitas, hulled hemp

ADDITIONAL TOPPINGS | Granola, toasted coconut flakes, cinnamon, dark chocolate chips, cacao powder

SWEETENER | Honey, pure maple syrup, agave syrup, Stevia, pure vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS

In a small serving bowl, dish one serving of yogurt. Top with your favorite fruit, nuts, seeds, granola, and additional toppings

as you like. Top with sweetener as needed. Serve immediately.



Individual Energy Boost Lunch Box

• **5.3 oz. Greek yogurt (or coconut yogurt for vegan alternative)**

• **1 Tbsp. maple syrup**

• **1/4 C. mixed nuts - almonds, walnuts, and cashew nuts**

• **1 C. mixed berries**

• **1 apple**

• **1 Tbsp. peanut or almond butter**

INSTRUCTIONS

Just place the Greek yogurt or coconut yogurt (for a vegan alternative) in the lunch box, add the maple syrup, and top with the mixed nuts. Slice the apple and add the peanut or almond butter. Add the mixed berries to the box and you are ready to go!



Black Bean Quinoa Fajita Bowls

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 15 minutes | Servings: 4

• **1 C. quinoa**

• **2 C. water**

• **1 lime, juiced**

• **½ C. fresh cilantro, roughly chopped**

• **2 bell peppers, thinly sliced (or use a spiralizer)**

• **1 jalapeno pepper, finely chopped (optional)**

• **1 small red onion, thinly sliced (or use a spiralizer)**

2 tsp. chili powder

• **2 tsp. cumin**

• **½ tsp. smoked paprika**

• **½ tsp. sea salt or kosher salt**

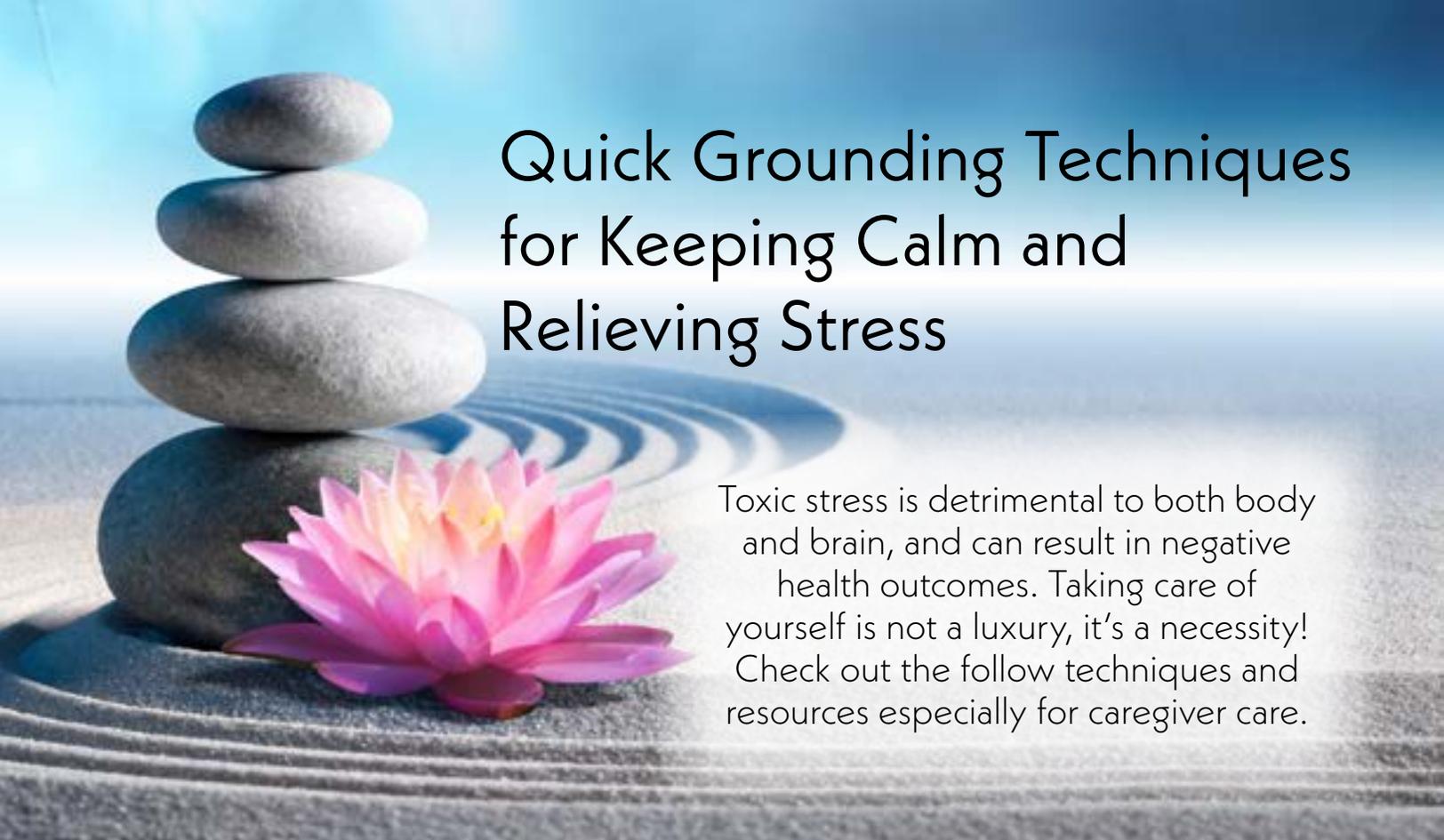
• **1 15-oz. can black beans, drained & rinsed**

• **Avocado, sliced (optional)**

INSTRUCTIONS

Add quinoa and water to a small saucepan. Bring water to a boil, reduce to simmer, and cover on low heat for 15 minutes. While the quinoa is cooking, prepare the bell peppers, red onion, and jalapeno (if using). Heat a non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add vegetables with a splash of water or extra-virgin olive oil and cook until vegetables have started to soften. Stir in spices. When ready to serve, mix lime juice and cilantro into the quinoa. Divide equally among four plates, along with equal parts peppers and beans. Garnish with avocado and additional cilantro, if desired, and enjoy!





Quick Grounding Techniques for Keeping Calm and Relieving Stress

Toxic stress is detrimental to both body and brain, and can result in negative health outcomes. Taking care of yourself is not a luxury, it's a necessity! Check out the follow techniques and resources especially for caregiver care.

THE 5 SENSES COUNTDOWN

- ▶ What are five things you can see?
 - *Take a deep breath and look around.*
- ▶ What are four things you can hear?
 - *Focus on the sounds around you.*
 - *Close your eyes if it helps.*
- ▶ What are three things you can touch?
 - *Reach for them and take note of their unique textures.*
- ▶ What are two things you can smell?
 - *Use this moment to take a big inhale and exhale.*
- ▶ What's one thing you can taste?
 - *Take one final, slow, deep breath.*
 - *Savor the flavor. Things like gum or hard candy are quick, easy options you can carry with you.*

BODY AWARENESS

- ▶ Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, exhale slowly through pursed lips
 - *Do this 5 times*
- ▶ Bring your awareness to your feet
 - *Place both feet flat on the ground*
 - *Wiggle your toes*
 - *Curl and uncurl your toes 5 times*
- ▶ Now, stomp in place 5 times
- ▶ Next, clench both hands into fists, then release
 - *Repeat this 5 times*
- ▶ Press your palms together firmly
 - *Hold for 10 seconds*
- ▶ Reach both arms up overhead with open palms
 - *Hold for 5 seconds, then relax your arms by your sides*
- ▶ Finally, take 5 more deep breaths
 - *Take note of a presence of calm throughout your body*



Caregiver Journal

When in the midst of the daily ins and outs of caregiving, it can be easy for time to sort of run together, making it harder to note progress, both in the person we care for and in ourselves.

These journal pages are intended as a way for you to chart your journey, to note the good, bad, and hard times, and to keep a record of your own incredible story of resilience.

Not much for pen and paper writing in the digital age? Journal apps, such as Penzu, have free options available, and can provide encryption, reminders to write, and the ability to download your musings into a PDF file.



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Caregiver Journal

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DATE

Something I enjoyed about today

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Something I struggled with today

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Words, ideas, or quotes I felt inspired by today and why

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Something I did with the person I provide care for

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Other things worth noting

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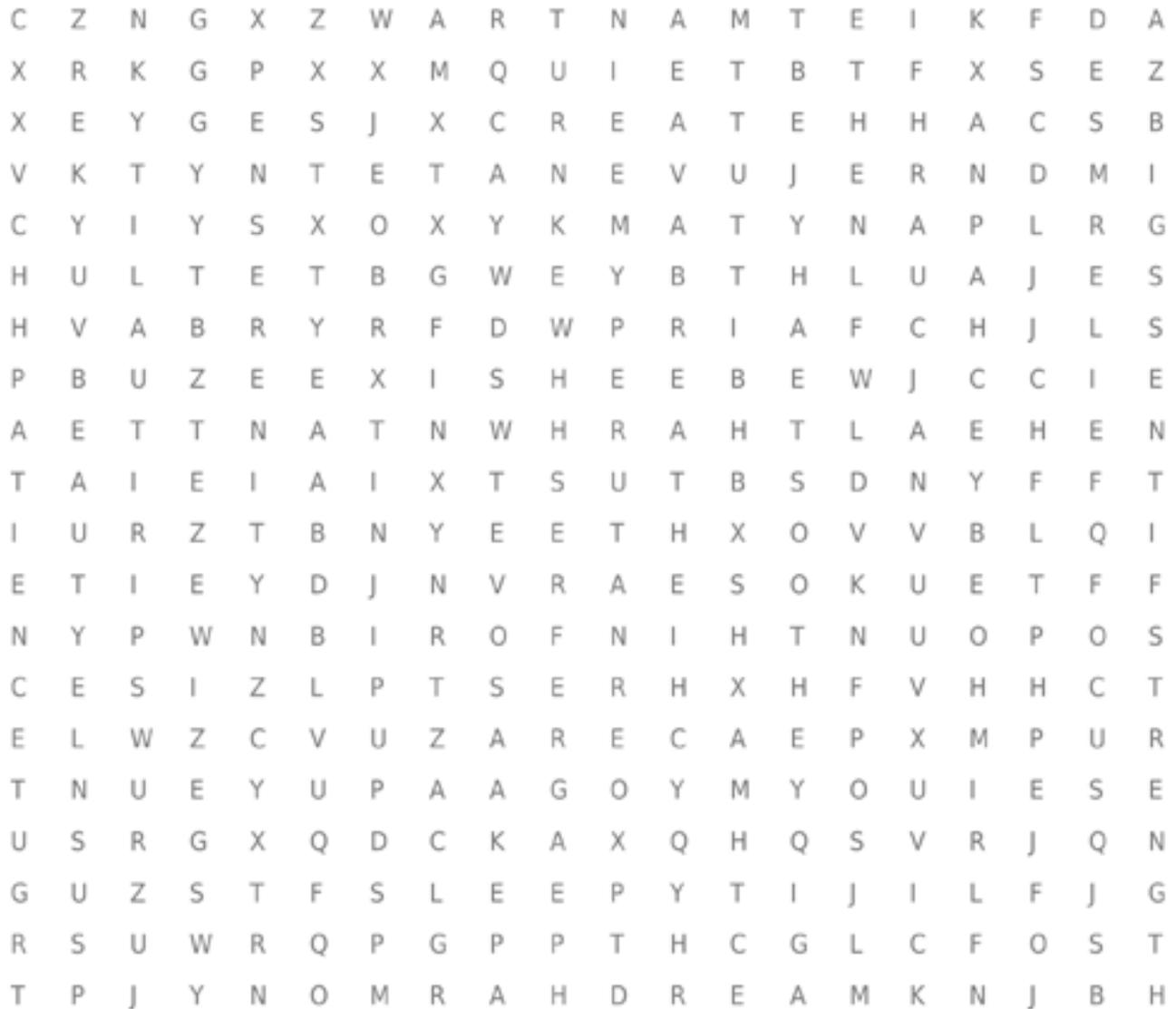
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Other things worth noting

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Caregiver Wordsearch

Searching for some “You” time? This wordsearch is filled with mindfulness reminder words for all our amazing caregivers. So grab a pen, and feel free to start and finish at your leisure. Words can be found in any direction (including diagonally) and can overlap each other. Use the word bank below to help guide your search. **PRO TIP:** cross off words from the bank as you find them!



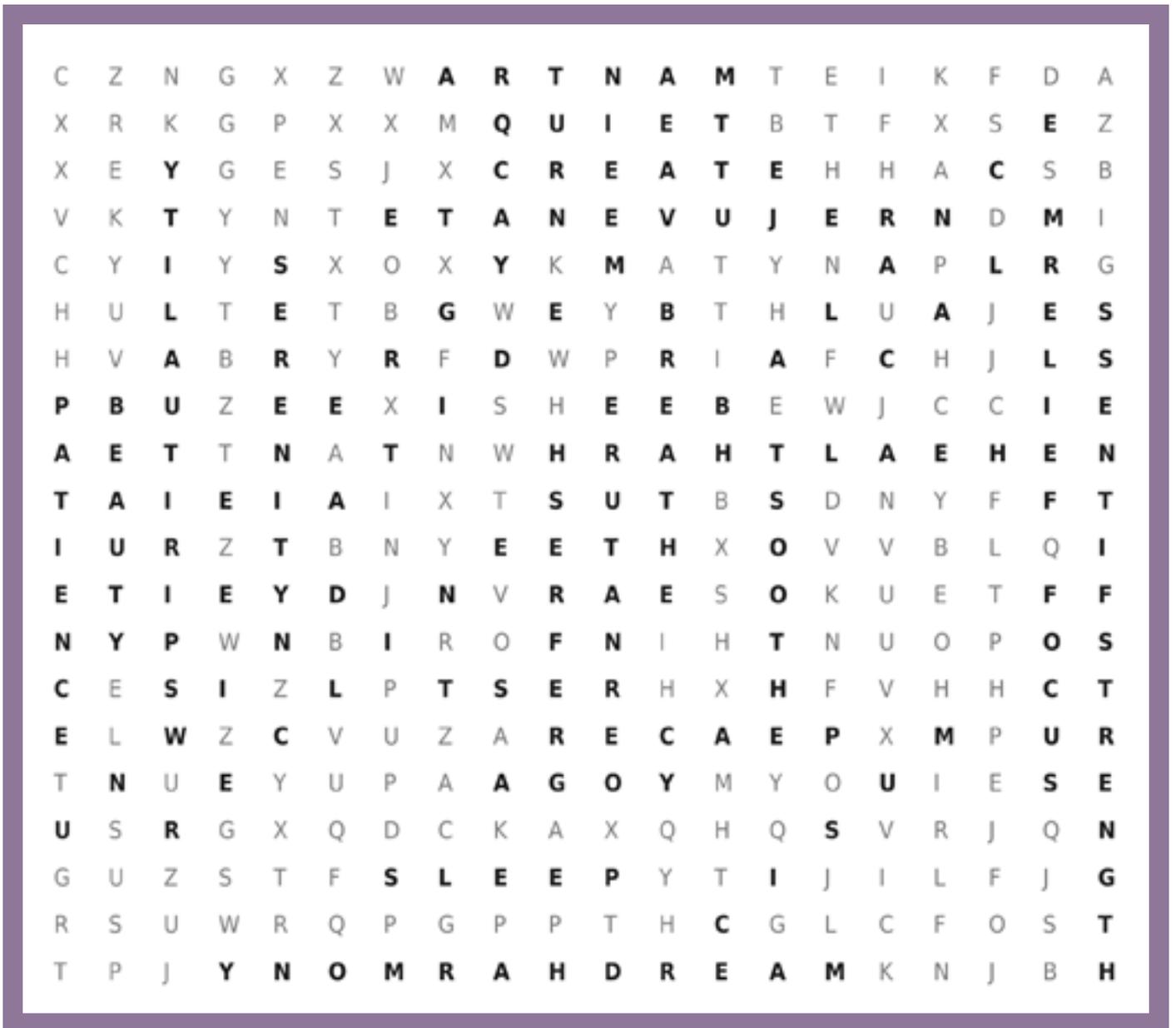
WORD BANK

- | | | | | |
|------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. mantra | 7. breathe | 13. peace | 19. serenity | 25. sleep |
| 2. fitness | 8. meditate | 14. music | 20. refresh | 26. quiet |
| 3. health | 9. rejuvenate | 15. energy | 21. soothe | 27. create |
| 4. rest | 10. yoga | 16. balance | 22. beauty | 28. strength |
| 5. calm | 11. nature | 17. dream | 23. harmony | 29. patience |
| 6. recline | 12. spirituality | 18. focus | 24. relief | 30. unwind |

Caregiver Wordsearch Puzzle Key

WORD BANK

- | | | | | |
|------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. mantra | 7. breathe | 13. peace | 19. serenity | 25. sleep |
| 2. fitness | 8. meditate | 14. music | 20. refresh | 26. quiet |
| 3. health | 9. rejuvenate | 15. energy | 21. soothe | 27. create |
| 4. rest | 10. yoga | 16. balance | 22. beauty | 28. strength |
| 5. calm | 11. nature | 17. dream | 23. harmony | 29. patience |
| 6. recline | 12. spirituality | 18. focus | 24. relief | 30. unwind |





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This class is accessible for wheelchair users and brain injury survivors.

CLASS DATES:

Every Thursday at 2:00 pm (Arizona time)
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(no class on 11/24)

Register now at: biaaz.org/ttdf

When you register, you will receive a separate confirmation email with link to the Zoom meeting space.

INTERNET ACCESS AND A DEVICE WITH CAMERA ARE REQUIRED

Cellphones are not recommended due to screen size being too small.



CLASS INSTRUCTOR —

S.Christina Boyd is a movement therapist with 28+ years of experience, an Educational Kinesiologist, Licensed Brain Gym® Instructor, and Master Practitioner of NLP.

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Caregiving

From Where
We Were to
Where We Are

BY KRISTIN O'SHAUGHNESSY

What does the term “caregiver” make you think of? The answer probably has to do with your personal experiences and even cultural beliefs. The Family Caregiver Alliance estimates the number of unpaid caregivers nationwide to be about 43.5 million, which is still likely lower than the reality. While these often unpaid, unsung heroes keep those dealing with health and psychological issues afloat, they may not see what they are doing as “caregiving” because that feels like a professional categorization. Many caregivers never self-identify as such because “You do for family.” They see it as an organic part of familial relationships rather than a role they play or a job they have.

FILIAL DUTY

The landscape of families and family-based care in the United States has been affected by our cultural shifts over the years. Once rooted in large, connected families needed for agricultural and pioneering realities, several generations would live in the same home or on a shared plot of land. The next farm over may even be some relatives willing to help at harvest time. If someone fell ill, the family took care of them.

This model gave way to industrialization and urban centers, with cities of strangers each living in their own bubble. With the advent of easy, individualized transportation and the roadway infrastructure, families could live further apart but still travel to see each other. This diaspora of the family unit is well-demonstrated by my own: I have immediate members in Arizona and California, with aunts, uncles, and cousins living in Illinois and Tennessee, and extended family in Oregon, New Mexico, and Nebraska. One family is spread over seven states!

With the distances growing between family members, the opportunity to care for one another can become an obstacle. It raises the question: does one family member have to move in order to be cared for or to care for someone?



Then there are the demands of caregiving that can disrupt the lifestyle built by living independently or separated from other family members. Suddenly, the vehicle is needed for doctor's appointments, a variant meal plan must be created/followed, physical space may be needed to house someone through a recovery period. Multiple studies cite how caregivers even experience a health decline of their own as they focus on someone else's wellbeing at the expense of their own diet, sleep, and energy. These stresses and the inability of some families to commit to a move or the caregiving process, has given rise to an entire industry.



PAID CAREGIVING

Perhaps because of it being historically done for free and predominantly by women, perhaps because of some of the unpleasant tasks involved, perhaps because home healthcare workers are often immigrants, perhaps because of a combination of institutional issues of race-gender-ableism... perhaps, perhaps, perhaps these reasons

continued next page



can begin to explain why caregivers have been classified as “One of the lowest paid workers in the US labor force” (Poo and Conrad). Paid caregivers are also often contracted workers, so there are rarely benefits like health insurance or paid sick leave. Early incarnations of home care would be the “domestic servant” who cared for the home, children, meals, and perhaps aging relatives, at exceedingly low wages while the lady of the house was free to pursue social engagements.

Due to the gendered and devalued evolution of caregiving, today’s industry must deal with low recruitment prospects and poor employee retention/high turnover. This leads to instability in the care provided and increases the risks for improper care or even abuse.

With few advocates raising awareness about such conditions, it is not surprising that poor working conditions, coupled with low pay and few-to-no benefits lead to some poor candidate prospects, which can risk the well-being of those entrusted to them as a result. Fighting to make sure these essential workers are properly trained and compensated lacks the sensationalism of an abuse scandal, which is when we most often hear about caregiving in the media. However, as citizens, we have the opportunity to voice our belief that the care industry is important and worthy of our investment as a community – we do this with how we vote, donate, and volunteer our time.

This is not to say there are no excellent in-home care and health aides, because there most definitely are. But as the saying goes, knowledge is power, and knowing where to look and what questions to ask can be the difference between unreliable, negligent lack of care and proper, qualified care. As part of this article, we are including several resources, both for those seeking caregivers for a loved one, or those looking to provide such care themselves.

Competent Caregiving Info

If you have donned the cape and become a family caregiver, there are programs available here in Arizona to help you. If you are eligible, you could be paid to be a family caregiver and/or get reimbursed for family caregiving expenses. Visit Family Caregiver Support under Services on des.az.gov for full details:

<https://des.az.gov/services/older-adults/family-caregiver-support>

Wondering if you might qualify for home health care services? Arizona Long-Term Care Services (ALTCS), provided through Arizona’s Medicaid program (called AHCCCS), typically cover all or most of the costs of care. Talk to a representative by calling toll-free at 888-621-6880 - Calls are answered Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also submit an application via email; additional information for completing this process can be found on the AHCCCS website at:

<https://www.azahcccs.gov/members/ALTCSlocations.html>

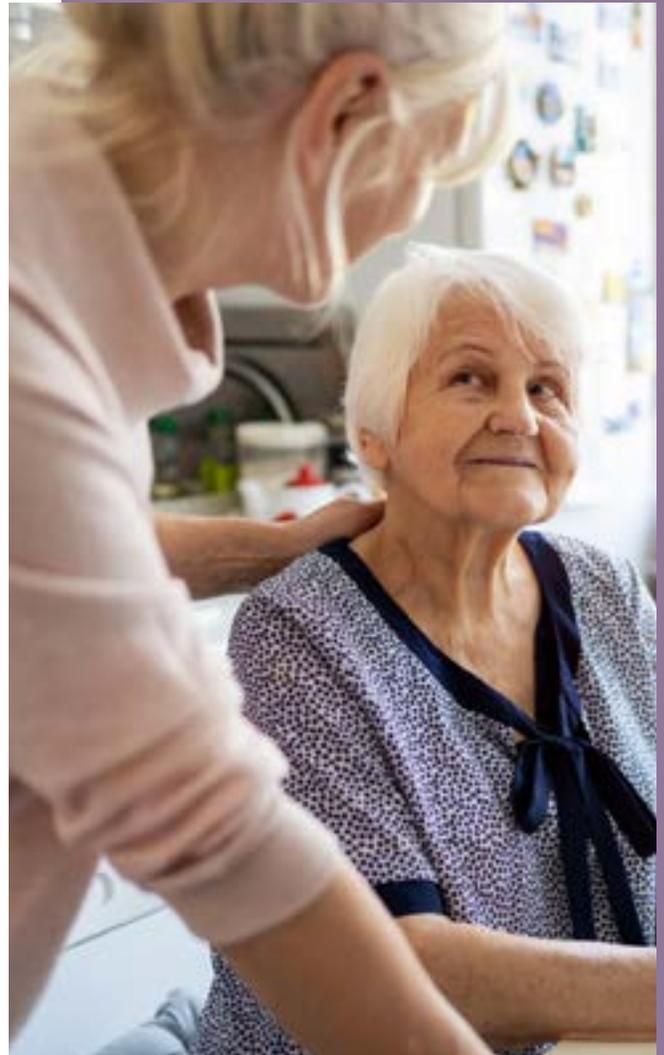
If you’re a Medicare recipient, depending on the circumstances, home health care will be covered by either Part A or Part B. Check online or contact your Medicare representative to verify your plan details and see how you can qualify. Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), or visit their website at:

<https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/home-health-services>

CARE RECIPIENT CONSIDERATIONS

There is also the perspective of the person receiving care. They may not want non-family members to know the depths of their struggles. Giving up independence, even for safety's sake, can be a tough pill to swallow. So, what may look like acceptance on the outside, or "grinning through the pain," often belies the internal struggle of having to share private moments with someone who is initially a stranger to them. It takes some brave transparency to admit when your memory is failing you, that you're in constant pain, or are not able to do your own activities of daily living (ADLs), like bathing or feeding yourself. Important to note as well is that in some cases, especially where brain injury is involved, a survivor's self-awareness may be limited, causing them to believe they need far less assistance than they do, further complicating an already complex situation.

The concepts of independence and self-reliance are strongly rooted in American culture and accepting care is an acknowledgment that we need something from someone. One way to help lighten the anxiety and shame for those receiving care is by collectively erasing the stigma surrounding it. While we may have moved further and further away from our agrarian-based ancestral roots, we can still join together as a community to ensure, "We do for one and ALL."



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Exploring Caregiver Fatigue

An insider
perspective

BY ANNE ADKINSON

In the brain injury community, the term “caregiver” can be complex. As unpaid family and friend caregivers, we can be the key to a survivor’s recovery and wellbeing. When caring for someone who was independent before an accident, illness, or injury, it can be hard to admit that our loved one needs our help to stay safe and healthy. The lines can also become blurred, as more and more survivors of brain injury find themselves also taking on caregiver duties, whether for their children, parents, or grandparents. Due to their many and varied inherent responsibilities, caregivers are especially susceptible to burnout and fatigue.

Join the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona’s newest team member Anne Adkinson as she explores her first experience as a caregiver and the valuable lessons she has learned from the experience.

My first experience being a caregiver was when I gave birth to my son. After several miscarriages, 16 weeks of strict bedrest, 22 hours of labor, and an emergency c-section, I was handed the most beautiful boy I had ever seen. I remember being surprised that he looked just like my mom. I couldn’t wait to take him home and begin our lives together. However, within the first few days of his life, he ended up back in the hospital because his tiny organs were shutting down. It was terrifying. I

begged, pleaded, and prayed to everything in the universe that he would recover.

My sister-in-law who had given birth a few months prior came to visit us in the hospital. After days of trying to keep a brave face, I completely fell apart emotionally, assuming she’d be a soft place to land. I sobbed as I shared my fears of losing my child, my guilt for his suffering, and the gut-wrenching feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. She listened quietly as I poured out my soul, then offered what

I hope she thought was support— “This should be the happiest time of your entire life. You should be more grateful for this opportunity.” It was a stunning, cutting response. What I needed in that moment was to vent my pent-up emotions as I sought validation for the fear and anxiety I was experiencing while also recovering from major surgery myself. Instead, I was met with my first experience of being shamed as a mother.

That evening my mom came to visit us in the hospital. I was misty eyed, but after my experience earlier, I kept my feelings to myself. She watched me for a while, then kindly took the baby from me and without an ounce of judgement said, “Being a new mom is hard, especially in the beginning. It’s amazing what sleep can do.” With that, she sent me home with strict instructions to eat, shower, and sleep while she stayed with the baby in the hospital.

It was the best sleep of my life. And my mom was right. It IS amazing what sleep can do. That one act of kindness free of judgement changed my entire outlook and I was able to be the strong, brave mother I needed to be for my child. This was the first of countless experiences I’ve had with my mom guiding me along my motherhood journey. My son ended up making a full recovery and is now healthy, happy, thriving, and heading into his senior year of high school.

Now being older and wiser, I look back on that experience and realize several things. First, it’s not fair to ask someone to utilize skills they don’t possess or allow my feelings to get hurt when someone isn’t capable of showing up in a way that I need. I already knew my sister-in-law to be critical, so confiding in her and having certain expectations for her response was bound to yield unfavorable results. Second, I see how my mom was the perfect example of how we can help others in distress. The key is offering kindness free of judgment. If my mom hadn’t recognized the signs of caregiver fatigue and intervened, my distressful moment could very easily have turned into a crisis. Third, it truly is amazing what sleep can do. By neglecting my own needs and ignoring the

warning signs of fatigue, I had allowed my physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion to reach a boiling point and I could no longer function properly. Fourth, let’s all agree to stop shaming each other. It only makes things worse, perpetuates negative stigmas surrounding mental health, and prevents people from getting the help they need until their situation has spiraled out of control.

Warning signs and symptoms of caregiver fatigue:

- ▶ Feeling depressed or anxious
- ▶ Mental and/or physical exhaustion
- ▶ Struggling to think clearly
- ▶ Irritability and mood swings
- ▶ Neglecting one’s own health and wellbeing
- ▶ Disrupted sleep

What to do if you are experiencing caregiver fatigue:

- ▶ Ask for help! Confide in a trusted friend, relative, clergy, counselor, or doctor. If they can’t help you, ask someone else until you find someone who can.
- ▶ Take steps to address wellbeing like sleep, mindfulness, exercise, and nutrition.
- ▶ Join a support group or social group for caregivers.
- ▶ Stop feeling guilty for having these feelings! It’s a normal part of being a caregiver.



Anne Adkinson is the Brain Injury Alliance’s Veteran and Military Caregiver Advocate. She resides in sunny Arizona where she is a mom, proud military spouse, and caregiver to her husband, who is a combat veteran. She is also the mom of a U.S. Marine.

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The Mindful Reflections

Angels on Earth

An Ode to Caregivers — By Connor LaPlant

As awareness slowly returns,
Mourning loss is the first they learn.
Vivid recollections of before,
Only spin them in circles more.

While rough conditions they may be,
Become the strengths the eye can't see.
The effort of those caring hands,
Strongly influence where we stand.

As trials continue to pile up,
These hands never cease or give up.
The determination to deliver more,
Is unlike anything seen before.

Though their labors may be difficult to detect,
They show the meaning of love, perfect.
Though their efforts aren't always observed,
They endure, demanding to be heard.

Now, as we build back from below,
Gratitude is what we owe,
Their resilience in their vital roles,
Prove they hold the purist of souls.



HELP SURVIVORS OF BRAIN INJURY GET BACK IN THEIR RACE

BRAIN INJURY ALLIANCE OF ARIZONA PRESENTS



SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2023 | RACE TIME: 8:00 A.M.

KIWANIS PARK TEMPE

RECOVERY CAN BE A MARATHON!

Your participation helps survivors of brain injury in their short- and long-term recovery from stroke, TBI, concussion, or brain tumor. Proceeds from the Run, Walk, & Roll 10K/5K/1-mile Fun Run/Walk go directly to Adaptive Recreation programs, including Camp Brain for adults.



All entries include
a commemorative T-shirt and medal



Take the first step - REGISTER TODAY!

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In addition to knowing that you're making life better for others,
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2023 CHAIRS: MISSY BYRD & DANIELLE SKRANAK



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facebook

Your time on social media has been time well spent!

A special thanks to our Facebook fundraiser donors so far in 2022! Your requests for donations, whether for your birthday or just because, have helped us to continue providing free resources and programs for survivors of brain injury, their families, and caregivers.

Total amount raised: \$3,299.87

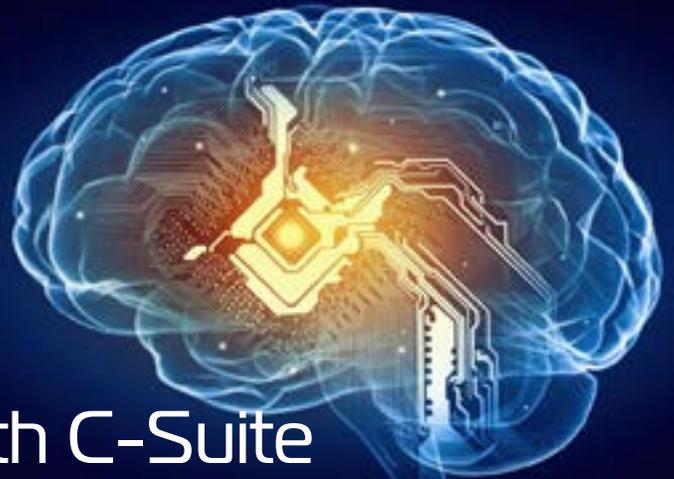
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Want to create your own fundraiser for the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona? Follow these steps to get started!

- ▶ Login to Facebook. On the left, **click Fundraisers**.
Tip: If you don't see Fundraisers on the left, then click **See more.*
- ▶ On the left, **click Raise money. Click Nonprofit**. You can either scroll to find the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona, or type our organization's name into the search bar.
- ▶ Select our organization. On the left, enter the goal amount of money you want to raise and the currency you want the funds to be in (U.S. dollar/currency).
- ▶ Click **Create**.
- ▶ A screen will appear where you can invite your friends to donate to your fundraiser, share your fundraiser in your feed, or donate to the fundraiser yourself.

For assistance creating your fundraiser, call our office at 1-888-500-9165
or email info@biaaz.org



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